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Editorial Notes

How times do change! Benjamin Franklin in his autobiography tells of an expedient used during the French war of 1754 to make the soldiers attend prayers. The chaplain complained that the men would not come. Franklin reminded him that one of the daily rations of the troops was a gill of rum, and suggested that if the chaplain would undertake to deal out this gill of rum, "and only just after prayers," the men would all be present. He undertook the office, and had no more trouble about absenteeism. But—At the present day, would a chaplain dispense rum?

It was on the occasion of this war of 1754 with France that a fast day was, for the first time, observed in Pennsylvania. In view of the defenseless condition of the Colony Franklin proposed a fast. The Governor and Council approved the suggestion. But the Secretary, being ignorant on this matter, confessed his inability to write the proclamation; and Benjamin Franklin, who had lived in Massachusetts, had to write the paper for him. It was circulated both in English and in German, and marked the first fast day on the Delaware river.

Nine-tenths of one's complaining is simply a matter of habit, as much a habit as coughing, or "sniffing," or the way of carrying oneself or sitting or speaking. It grows as rapidly as these other habits. Unlike many of them, it has a moral side, however. It causes rapid deterioration of the spiritual powers, lessened activity, decreased influence, loss of inward peace, and satisfaction, increased discontent and gloom, growing unhappiness and murmuring, and alienation of friends. The best cure for it is to nip it in the bud and ask Christ to heal the spot where the vine bled and to keep it healed.

There is wisdom in moderation. In years gone by, some Calvinists so far ignored the human element in the work of salvation as to hinder the sinner. On the other hand last week's "Wesleyan Christian Advocate" (a Methodist journal) says: "After all, it may be inquired whether in the opposition of the Methodists to the doctrines of unconditional election and the final

perseverance, they have not failed in some measure to properly estimate the great work John Calvin did, and the great service to the truth his system of doctrine has done the world. While the followers of John Calvin have made much of the divine in the matter of human salvation—more, perhaps, than the plain word of God warrants—it is well for us who have resisted the teachings of the Calvinists to ask ourselves whether or not we have not made too much of the human."

The accident to Dr. W. P. Jacobs, of which we spoke last week, will limit, for some time to come, his labors in behalf of the Thornwell Orphanage. This is the season when receipts are usually light and any interruption in the contributions would be serious in its effects on the Orphanage. We would remind our readers of this emergency and we know they will not forget the fatherless ones. It is suggested that during the illness of Dr. Jacobs, checks may be made payable to Mr. J. A. Bailey, Treasurer, at Clinton, S. C.

The statistics of the American Baptists, which are before us, furnish some interesting facts. The basis of our calculations is the total membership which is set down as five millions (5,115,177). The net growth of the denomination was 145,653, or about three per cent of the total membership. They report churches 48,302: the net growth is therefore about three members to each church.

The baptisms during the year in the Baptist Church were a little under three hundred thousand (294,383), or about six per cent of the membership. But the "exclusions and erasures" during the year were 90,677. It may be that in the Presbyterian Church, there ought to have been exclusions not a few: it is to the credit of the Baptist churches that they do exclude the unworthy. But when the exclusions amount to nearly one-third of the members received, the question arises whether there have been many hasty admissions to the Church.

Do these hasty admissions promote the Church's welfare? In our own Church, there have been many such, and we would use the occasion for a caution to our own people. The effect on the individual is apt to be evil. If a man be received to the communion and then finds that his profession of faith has brought him no comfort, he is apt to fancy that religion is without power. And that hurts him.

Hasty admissions to the communion injure the spirituality of the churches. Members are very apt to gauge their own conduct not by the Bible but by the lives of their fellow members. Unregenerate church members depress the general standard of church life. Is it wise to receive any who do not give clear evidence of a change of heart? Is it wise to receive them immediately after they experience their first desire?